DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 299 541 CS 009 343

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TITLE Literature-Centered Reading and Language Minority Students.
PUB DATE Aug 87
NOTE 29p.; Paper prepared for the Institute on Literacy and Learning Language Minority Project, University of California (Santa Barbara, CA, August 24-25, 1987).
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052) -- Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Basal Reading; Beginning Reading; *Bilingual Education Programs; Case Studies; Elementary Education; *English (Second Language); Individual Differences; Individualized Reading; Language Experience Approach; Limited English Speaking; *Literature; *Reading Instruction; Reading Processes; *Reading Programs; Reading Writing Relationship; Second Language Programs; Teaching Models; Writing Processes
IDENTIFIERS Nonnative Speakers; Whole Language Approach

ABSTRACT

This paper argues that literature-centered reading programs, based on the perspective that reading is the process of bringing meaning to print, are in the best interest of the language minority students in the nation's elementary schools. After a review of basal reading systems and language-centered reading programs, the paper describes the problems faced by language minority students and limited English proficient (LEP) students in traditional reading programs. Several case studies are presented in the development of second language literacy. The paper concludes with a model of a literature-centered reading program for language minority students which is built on the premises that reading and writing are processes acquired through use; that the ability to read and write competently in two languages is of value; and that elementary school children of the same chronological age differ widely in their interests and abilities. The model advocated in the paper has three phases: (1) core book units, in which students are provided with a thorough experience with one book; (2) literature units, to allow students to learn about literary genres, themes, and selected authors; and (3) individualized reading and writing, in which students select the books to read and the genres and topics they wish to write about. The paper also discusses the Language Experience Approach and the use of predictable books, and stories, two special intervention programs for beginning readers, whether bilingual or monolingual. (Seventy-six references are appended.) (RS)

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Literature-Centered Reading and Language Minority Students

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Paper prepared for the
Institute on Literacy and Learning
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University of California, Santa Barbara
August 24 and 25, 1987

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Literature-Centered Reading and Language Minority Students

This paper will advance a single thesis: literature-centered reading programs are in the best interest of the language minority students in our elementary schools. Unfortunately, discussions of how to develop literacy in language minority children are usually limited to debates over whether students should begin reading in their native language or in English (see reviews by Willig, 1985, and Hakuta & Gould, 1987). Reading materials and methodologies are rarely given the attention they garner in examinations of monolingual development. In a time when the demographics of American public schools indicate classrooms will have more and more students whose native language is not English (Arias, 1986), the benefits of developing literacy with children's books, rather than with standard basal reading systems, need to be fully considered.

Literature-Centered Reading: Some Background

Before examining issues related to reading and language minority students, a review of basal reading systems and literature-centered reading programs is in order. Of all the tasks assigned to the American elementary school, the development of competent readers has occupied the highest position. In his report on the status of elementary education in the United States, Secretary of Education William J. Bennett (1986) stated this point in fervent terms, "The elementary school must assume as its sublime and most solemn responsibility the task of teaching every child in it to read" (p. 21). Throughout American history teachers have relied on commercially published reading texts to teach children to read (Venezky, 1987). Over 90% of contemporary American elementary school students receive reading instruction dictated by a basal reading system (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott & Wilkinson, 1985).

A basal reading system includes a series of reading textbooks (called either "readers," "basals," or "basal readers") from preprimers to grade eight, teacher's editions, workbooks, skill practice sheets, tests, and other supplemental materials. Characteristics of the first full set of reading books published in the United States, the McGuffey Readers of the 1830s, have remained constant in basal readers over the last 150 years (Smith, 1965). The readers are anthologies, containing dozens of selections. At each level, material is chosen so that vocabulary is controlled. To achieve this control, some selections taken from other sources are edited. The readers are designed to be sequential. The authors of a series attempt to create a set of books, each volume more difficult than its predecessor. As a result of a desire to control vocabulary and to provide material that is unoffensive, and thus appeal to the broadest market, the content of basal readers has been criticized as bland and unimaginative (Anderson et al., 1985; Goodman, 1986a).

During the 1920s the authors of the basals incorporated into their programs a definition of reading as the mastery of a sequence of subskills (Robinson, 1977). Durkin (1978-79) and Goodlad (1984) provided documentation of the time consuming and dominating role skill-related materials came to play in elementary classrooms. Durkin, after 300 hours of observation, concluded "The overwhelming influence of worksheets and other assignment sheets was unexpected . . . the thought that they would constitute almost the whole of the instructional programs was never entertained. Nonetheless, that was the case" (p. 524). Goodlad's Study of Schooling involved observations in 134 classrooms. He found reliance on commercial materials led to a steady diet of skills lessons for children. He stated, "The state of reading in the classrooms we observed seemed quite dismal. Exclusive of the common practice of students reading orally from a common text, reading occupied about 6% of class time at the elementary level" (p. 106).

The position that basal readers should be replaced with children's literature has been argued for over 100 years. Charles Eliot, then president of Harvard, was quoted in 1891:

> It would be for the advancement of the whole public school system if every reader was hereafter to be absolutely excluded from the school. I object to them because they are not real literature; they are but mere scraps of literature, even when the single lessons or materials of which they are composed are taken from literature . . . . I believe that we should substitute in all our schools real literature for readers (in Hardy, 1891, pp. 145-146).

Eliot's statement was made in the first of two historical periods when literature challenged basal readers. The first began in the 1880s, and later became intertwined with progressive education (Cremin, 1962; Smith, 1965). The second began in the 1950s, when educators wanted to account for individual differences in children (Olson, 1949, 1952). Veatch (1986) recalled this period as "those heady days in the fifties when we really thought we had a chance to get rid of basal readers" (p. 586). The basals, however, survived the challenge.

It seems a third period of literature-instead-of-the-basals is occurring now. The popularity of "whole language" approaches to reading and writing has made literature the reading program in some classrooms (Clarke, 1987; Goodman, 1986b; Newman, 1985). Another motivating force for expanding the use of children's books has been the content of two influential reports. Secretary Bennett's First Lessons (1986) and Becoming a Nation of Readers (Anderson et al., 1985) were critical of basal readers. Each report proposed a greater role

for literature in the elementary curriculum. Each, however, called for improving, rather than eliminating basal-oriented instruction. In California, an initiative from the State Department of Education proposes to bring literature-centered reading programs to the state's elementary classrooms (Cullinan, 1986; English-LanguageArts Framework, 1987).

A "literature-centered reading program" can be defined as instructional practices and student activities using novels, informational books, short stories, plays, and poems. "Literature," then, is used as an inclusive term for a variety of reading material, and not as an indicator of quality. Some of what students read may be written by the children themselves. The reading material in a literature-centered classroom should meet both of the following criteria: (1) the literature was not rewritten for instrucional purposes by a textbook publisher, and (2) the literature supplants rather than supplements the basal reading program so that of all the material students read, less than 25% is from a basal program. Throughout this paper the term "literature-centered" is used instead of the more common "literature-based." Literature-centered seems a more accurate descriptor of the type of reading program under discussion, a classroom where literary works become the nucleus from which a variety of activities emanate.

Three organizing orientations can become the foundation for literature-centered reading: individualized reading, literature units, and whole language. Individualized reading features self-selection of materials by pupils, and conferences between each child and the teacher (Veatch, 1959, 1978). Glazer and Williams (1979) defined a literature unit "as a small set of books - usually about five titles - related by theme, style, story situation, or other common element" (p. 563). Joy Moss (1984) preferred the term "focus units,"

while Charlotte Huck and Janet Hickman (1976-) edit a publication, The WEB, that includes graphic displays of units centered on a single book. Whole language, more a philosophy than a clearly defined method, views language as a means of communicating complete (or whole) messages, rather than as a thing to be learned in bits and pieces through context-free exercises (Clarke, 1987; Edelsky, Draper & Smith, 1983; Goodman, 1986b; Harste & Burke, 1977; Newman, 1985). In whole language classrooms teachers often use a combination of the language experience approach, individualized reading, literature units, and a substantial amount of student-authored material.

Much of the research on literature-centered reading programs was conducted over 20 years ago, involved comparisons of individualized reading with basal programs, and did not address issues in the development of literacy in language minority students (Duker, 1968). At the time, advocates of basal reading systems concluded this body of research failed to make the case for abandoning the basals (Chall, 1967; Clymer & Robinson, 1961; Sartain, 1960). Krashen's recent reviews (1985, 1987) agreed with Veatch's earlier (1978) contrary conclusion: the majority of studies showed children in individualized reading, when compared to basal groups, did signficantly better on tests of reading achievement and measures of attitude toward reading.

Two recent comparative studies are noteworthy. Eldredge and Butterfield (1984, 1986) compared basal-oriented, ability grouped instruction; self-selection literature programs; and both programs with a phonics component in several second grade classrooms. The authors concluded that the use of the literature programs had a positive effect upon students' attitudes and achievement. Bird's (1984) dissertation compared the Junior Great Books program (Dennis & Moldorf, 1975) with a traditional basal approach. Junior

Great Books is a program of the Great Books Foundation and consists of soft-cover anthologies designed for use in grades two to twelve. Unlike the basals, the material is unedited. After reading selections in the anthologies, a discussion leader, usually the teacher, leads children through a series of open-ended questions (Knight, 1985). Bird's study examined the critical reading and thinking skills of high ability fifth graders. She created three groups. One group used a basal program, a second used both basals and Junior Great Books, the third used only Junior Great Books. Her data showed students in the Junior Great Books program and the group in the mixed program did better on measures of critical thinking and critical reading.

A development of interest in the last decade has been the introduction of qualitative designs utilizing ethnographic data-gathering techniques in reading research (Barr, 1986). Four qualitative dissertations studied elementary classrooms that were literature-centered. Hickman (1981, 1983) and Hepler (1982) focused on children's response to literature. Hill (1983) completed a case study of one exemplary teacher's classroom. My dissertation (Zarrillo, 1988) described and analyzed literature-centered reading programs in five elementary classrooms. These studies revealed that literature-centered programs tend to view reading as a meaning-seeking activity that develops through use. Rather than relying on commercially-prepared materials to teach skills, teachers planned a variety activities, including writing, discussing, art, and drama, to provide avenues for children to respond to what they read.

Reading and Language Minority Students

The teaching of skills in the name of developing reading, so prevalent in elementary reading programs for English monolinguals, is even more pronounced for language

minority students. Whether they are placed in bilingual classrooms or in monolingual settings, language minority students typically are subjected to context-free, skills-dominated reading instruction (Barrerra, 1983; Fillmore, 1986; Franklin, 1986). After 15 years of research on the academic development of limited English proficient (LEP) Hispanic and Chinese children in both bilingual and all-English classrooms, Lily Wong Fillmore (1986) concluded:

> But it has only been in the past year or two, as I said, that I have come to understand what may be the crucial problem for language minority students. While analyzing the data we had collected for the several studies I have been working on, I came to realize that what these LEP children generally get in school does not add up to a real education at all. Much of what they are being taught can be described as "basic skills" rather than "content." Instruction in reading, for example, is mostly focused on developing accuracy in reading rather than on understanding or appreciating textual materials (p. 478).

This situation is particularly acute for Hispanic students in bilingual programs who begin reading in Spanish. Spanish reading pedagogy is dominated by the fundamental position that phonics is "the best approach for teaching initial reading" (Barrera, 1983, p. 164). This phonics fixation has been subject to criticism (Barrera, 1983; Franklin, 1986). Of particular interest was the conclusion

Sarah Hudelson (1981) reached after investigating the oral reading behavior of native Spanish-speaking children reading in Spanish. Her results showed that even in a language with a high degree of sound-symbol regularity, like Spanish, "the reading process involves more than simply looking at letters and transforming them into sounds. The reading process is a creative one, and the reader uses graphophonemic cues but is not limited to them" (p. 20).

Once language minority students begin English reading instruction they often receive a heavier dosage of skills lessons than their monolingual classmates. Franklin (1986) provided descriptions of four common beliefs held by teachers who are attempting to develop English literacy in limited English proficient Hispanic children: (1) a great deal of time needs to be spent teaching the vocabulary the child will encounter in the English basal reader, (2) a high level of metalinguistic awareness needs to be developed in the child for success in the literacy program; that is the language minority child needs to drill on the names of letters, the various sounds the letters make, and to analyze the sounds in words, (3) a great deal of English phonics instruction is necessary for reading success, and (4) writing tasks for language minority children must be carefully controlled by the teacher in order for the children to be successful. Franklin concluded that "when Hispanic limited English speaking children had difficulty with these skills, it was their cultural and language background that was blamed, rather than methods, materials, or teacher assumptions" (p. 51).

There has been little research on the effects of a literature-centered reading program on second language reading. Two studies deserve mention. Schon, Hopkins, and Davis (1982) investigated the impact of providing a great variety of books in Spanish and sixty minutes a week of free reading on the reading attitudes and the English and Spanish

comprehension, vocabulary, and reading speed of second, third, and fourth grade Hispanic children. The Hispanic children in control group classes received reading instruction from basals in English. The experimental groups self-selected Spanish books and read them silently for at least an hour a week. Results showed no significant differences in the gains (from a pre-treatment test to a post-treatment test eight months later) in English reading. Results of tests in Spanish showed significant differences in favor of the experimental groups in Spanish comprehension, vocabulary, and reading speed among third and fourth grade students, and in Spanish vocabulary among second grade students. The experimental group had significantly better reading attitudes. In this study the results of a self-selection, free reading program in Spanish resulted in Hispanic children who read as well in English as Hispanics in English basal programs, read better in Spanish, and had better attitudes toward reading.

Warwick Elley and 1983
Francis Mangubhai ~~(1986)~~ investigated English reading and writing achievement among elementary students in Fiji. There the majority of students have either Fijian or Hindi as a first language. These children learn to read and write in their native tongue, ESL begins in Grade 1, and in Grade 4 English becomes the medium of instruction. Mangubhai was concerned with what happened in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades, when the students were reading and writing in English. Twelve schools were selected in rural Fiji, where the children were not likely to have contact with English outside of school. Four schools (the control group) continued the normal English curriculum. This consisted of a structural audiolingual program, with two 15-minute oral English lessons drilling on a sequential set of English

structures. Reading was taught through carefully graded readers and activities provided to reinforce the structures taught in the oral lessons.

The two experimental groups spent the same amount of time on English language arts as the control groups. The time allocated for English instruction (about 30 minutes a day) was established in directives from the Ministry of Education. The experimental groups were provided with "high-interest, well-illustrated story and non-fiction books" (Mangubhai, 1986, p. 46) as part of a "Book Flood Project." One group (four schools) used the Shared Book Experience advocated by Holdaway (1979). The teacher chose high-interest stories and read them to the class. The books were frequently enlarged to make a giant book. The stories were re-read on subsequent days, with the children reading aloud parts of the text, and discussing the content of the story. The second experimental group (4 schools) spent the allotted daily time in sustained silent reading (SSR) (McCracken, 1971). Teachers read aloud to popularize some of the books brought to the classrooms through the Book Flood Project. A definite time each day was set when teachers and students read books silently. There were no book reports or follow-up written assignments. The study, originally planned for one school year, was continued for a second. At the end of the second year, results showed the two experimental groups (Shared Book and SSR), together and separately, did signficantly better on tests of reading comprehension, English structures, and written comprehension. Interestingly enough, the SSR group scored higher than the Shared Book group on reading comprehension tests at the end of the second year.

Developing Second Language Literacy: Two Classrooms

My dissertation (Zarrillo, 1988) described and anaylzed literature-centered reading programs in five Los Angeles County

public school elementary classrooms. The study employed a multiple case study design. Each case study involved the use of ethnographic data-gathering techniques: interviews with key informants, classroom observation, and document analysis. The primary concerns of the project were the planning and implementing of literature-centered reading programs. Though all of the classrooms included language minority students, the reading programs of two teachers were unique in their approach toward developing second language literacy, and will be discussed here. In these two classrooms, the limited English proficient (LEP) students were a distinct minority among their English monolingual peers. The LEP students were in the process of developing English literacy. Neither classroom was bilingual, all instruction was in English. These characteristics (LEP students a minority, developing English literacy, monolingual setting) are noteworthy, considering the large number of language minority students who share these educational circumstances.

Sarah McCarver (the names of teachers and students are fictitious) and a partner team-taught 58 first, second, and third graders. Mrs. McCarver was responsible for reading and language arts and used an individualized reading and writing program. Each student selected reading material from the 1300-book classroom library, the school library, or from a children's library at a university nearby. Writing was personalized as well, each child selected his or her genre and topic for composition. Reading and language arts time had three parts: (1) A period of quiet reading, usually about35 minutes. Students read their books. When they finished, they selected new ones. Mrs. McCarver held individual conferences with four to six students, discussing the book or books each child had read. (2) The entire group met

on a rug in the center of the room. McCarver and her students shared what they were reading and writing. (3) A period of about 40 minutes when students wrote their stories or poems, and McCarver held writing conferences with individuals.

Mrs. McCarver's "orange group" consisted of 20 third graders and 11 second graders. Elena, a second grader whose first language was Spanish, was the only LEP student in this group. Elena attended English as a second language (ESL) classes each day and was reading and writing in English. In a classroom where individual differences were acknowledged instead of ignored, Mrs. McCarver's goal was to respond to the personal needs of each child. Self-selection in reading and writing provided material uniquely appropriate for each child's interests and abilities. During observations conducted in February of 1987, Elena read a variety of beginning English books. She was writing a story with a fairy tale setting.

In addition to self-selection and self-pacing, two aspects of Mrs. McCarver's program helped Elena grow as a reader and writer. The conferences between McCarver and Elena, conducted between two and six times each week for periods of five to ten minutes, were a chance for Mrs. McCarver to respond to Elena's literacy needs. McCarver read aloud to Elena, Elena read aloud to McCarver, they read together. The content of the books Elena read was discussed and vocabulary explained. Elena read her written efforts to Mrs. McCarver, who provided encouragement and guidance towards standard English forms. In addition, Elena's classmates offered considerable assistance. Children read to Elena and Elena read to her friends. Elena asked classmates for help when she didn't understand a word or she needed help on spelling on usage.

At another school in a different district, Jacqueline Javier taught fourth grade. Miss Javier had an extensive

read-aloud program. She read from the books she assigned to her students, and a variety of other works, including full novels, stories, and poetry. Unlike Sarah McCarver's individualized reading program, Miss Javier retained a high degree of control over what students read. She began the year with selections from the literature anthology Across Wide Fields (Sebesta, 1982). The class completed units on The Hundred Dresses (Estes, 1944), an adaptation of Richard Henry Dana's Two Years Before the Mast (Hurdy, 1967), Sarah, Plain and Tall (MacLachlan, 1985), and Island of the Blue Dolphins (O'Dell, 1960). For a period of time after Christmas, Javier divided her students into two groups. One read In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson (Lord, 1984), while the other read The Trumpet of the Swan (White, 1970). The children had an intense experience with one piece of literature, "Hiawatha." Each child memorized the stanzas on Hiawatha's boyhood included in Susan Jeffers' (1983) illustrated book of the Longfellow poem. Also, Javier's students selected books from the school library and read them during SSR and at home.

Javier led her students through a series of literature-centered activities. A pattern frequently followed had three parts. First, children would gather on the carpet in front of the room to listen to Javier read. When reading, Javier paused often to emphasize plot developments, the author's style, or to explain unfamiliar vocabulary. In the second part, students returned to their seats and reread the section of the novel Javier had completed. Sometimes this reading was done with a partner. At other times the children read silently. The third phase was a response to what had been read. Children discussed the selection in groups, wrote in journals, or completed an art project.

Four of Miss Javier's 32 fourth graders were Asian-born LEP children. Each spoke accented English, though all

four were no longer receiving ESL instruction. Javier used the following instructional techniques to help the four LEP students develop English literacy:

(1) Javier provided special explanaticns of idioms and metaphors that appeared in the novels the children were reading.

(2) The four children were provided copies of the novels to take home so that the books could be re-read for practice.

(3) Miss Javier's classroom was adjacent to the school library. In addition to the activities on the children's novels, there was a self-selection component to the reading program. The four LEP children were thus able to read books of individual interest.

(4) Javier's reading program stressed multicultural themes and involved an extended unit on Japanese fairy tales.

(5) The novels were read in different ways. First, Miss Javier would read a portion (usually a chapter) aloud. Then, children reread the same pages. Sometimes this was done with a partner. The four LEP children were often paired with the most proficient readers in the class. Other times, the portion of the novel was read again by children in groups of four or five. Some chapters were reread silently as each child found a cozy place in the room to curl up with the book.

(6) After reading and rereading a part of a novel, the children engaged in some response activity. Most of the response activities, usually involving art, writing, or discussion, were completed in small groups. Co-operative learning was a regular feature of the reading program. When Javier wanted children to respond individually, she gave her students choices of response activities.

(7) Writing was developed with a whole language philosophy. The LEP children, rather than struggling with

context-free skills exercises, developed their English writing by composing stories, poems, and short essays explaining their feelings about what they were reading.

(8) For part of the school year, Javier adjusted the reading assignments for the LEP students. For example, while more advanced readers read a more challenging novel, the LEP students and their less developed classmates read a less complex book. It should be noted, however, that this ability grouping occurred for a small portion of the school year. Miss Javier allowed her LEP students to participate in the same enriched literature-centered reading program as her most developed children.

A Model of Literature-Centered Reading for Language Minority Students

A literature-centered reading program for language minority students should be built upon three premises:

(1) Reading and writing are processes acquired through use. Children learn to read by reading and learn to write by writing (see Douglass, 1983, and Smith, 1978). The role of the teacher is to create a literate environment where students read and write meaningful units of text. This perspective is at odds with the conventional wisdom, which views reading and writing as things to be taught, as hundreds of skills to be learned free of context and meaning.

(2) The ability to read and write competently in two languages is a good thing for students to have (Cummins, 1979). Bilingualism is a positive capability for cognitive, cultural, social, and ultimately, professional reasons. The role of the teacher is to create an environment where students develop and maintain bilingual literacy. This perspective is at odds with the conventional wisdom, which views a language minority child's bilingualism as a deficit.

(3) Elementary school children of the same chronological age differ widely in their interests and abilities (see

Olson, 1948). The role of the teacher is to create an environment where individual differences are accounted for in materials, curriculum, and instruction. This perspective is at odds with the conventional wisdom, which either ignores differences or attempts to account for them by creating inflexible ability groups, an ineffective practice which provides children of supposed low ability a lasting stigma and an unchallenging brand of reading instruction (Anderson et al., 1985).

The model of literature-centered reading presented here would allow children to acquire literacy in their native language first (see Willig, 1985, and Hakuta & Gould, 1987, for research reviews), maintain their first language abilities throughout their schooling (Cummins, 1979), and to develop English literacy during their elementary years.

Literature-centered reading programs should blend the best of the three orgainizing orientations reviewed in a previous section of this paper: individualized reading, whole language, and literature units. The reading program would have three phases, which correspond to the recommendations made by Monson (1987) and the California State Department of Education's English -Language Arts Framework (1987). The model presented here is a synthesis of ideas from the authorities cited in the first section of this paper, from my dissertation research, and from my ten years as an elementary school teacher.

Phase One: Core Book Units. The goal of this phase is to provide a thorough experience with one book. There are several sources that make suggestions for core books, a good place for teachers to start is Recommended Readings in Literature Kindergarten through Grade Eight from the California State Department of Education (1987). Each student would have a copy of the core book, which would be read aloud by the teacher. The book, or parts of the book, could be presented to students through film, if a worthy cinematic

version exists. Students should read silently as individuals, with partners, or in small groups after the teacher reads aloud.

Writing and discussing serve as the primary vehicles for students to respond to what they have read. Children should keep journals, and write in them each day. Students could write letters, or poems, or diary entries from the perspectives of the characters in the book. Speculative writing, where students answer the question, "What do you think will happen when . . .?" works well as a stimulus. Discussions should occur among groups of students with and without the teacher as leader, among the entire class, and between the teacher and individuals. The core book units should include activities in art, music, social studies, science, and drama.

There are two important features of the core book phase which teachers should incorporate in their reading programs:

(1) There should be a limited number of core book units each year. In my dissertation research I found some classrooms where this was the only phase of the reading program. A series of children's novels, selected by the teacher and read by all students at the same time and at the same pace, replaced the basals. Such a literature-centered program fails to adequately account for individual differences. In the primary grades, there should be six or seven core units, each lasting one or two weeks. In grades four, five, and six there should be three or four core units each lasting two to four weeks. In bilingual classrooms, some of the core books should be in the first language of the language minority students. Children should have the option to respond to the core books in their first language.

(2) During the core book units there should be a 20 to 30 minute daily period when students can read books of their

choosing without interruption. The teacher should conduct individual conferences to discuss and review what students are reading. All reading programs should a self-selection component, and teachers should encourage language minority students to read books written in their first language and books written in English.

Phase Two: Literature Units . The goal of the second phase is to allow students to learn about literary genres, themes, and selected authors, and at the same time grow as readers and writers. During literature units the level of teacher control over reading material and response activities decreases as students assume greater responsibility. Literature units introduce children to several books linked by theme, genre, or author. For example, a literature unit could be titled "The Books of Roald Dahl," and allow children to become familiar with titles written by that author. Several genres could be the basis for literature unit, such as fairy tales, mysteries, biographies, frontier stories, or space adventures. Thematic units could be organized around survival novels or books with school settings. For each unit the teacher would bring as many books as possible (hopefully, 40 to 50) that fit within the theme's boundaries. Ideally, the books should be written at a variety of levels (this is not always possible in author units), and should include works written in the first languages of the language minority students in the class. Several copies of popular titles should be available. Students would then select a book or books to read during the unit. For example, during a fourth grade unit on books with school settings, the classroom library should include four to five copies of each of Beverly Cleary's popular Ramona books, one copy of each of Patricia Reilly Giff's Kids of the Polk Street School series, and 20 to 30 books by other authors with school

settings (for specific suggestions, see Jalongo & Renck, 1987). During a literature unit, the teacher picks one book to read aloud to the class.

For each literature unit the teacher presents a variety of response activities for students to choose. Some children may respond to the books they have read through art, by making murals or dioramas; others by writing sequels to the books they read or dramatizing a scene from a book; still others may wish to make audio or video tapes, design book jackets, or write newspaper-style reviews. It should be noted that one characteristic shared by all the five literature-centered classrooms examined in my dissertation was a procedure for publishing student-authored texts. Though the publication technology ranged from staples and construction paper to computer-refined text and sewn bindings, each of the classrooms had libraries of books written by children. An important part of a literature-centered reading program, then, is the writing, publication, and sharing of student-authored texts.

As in phase one, there should be a 20 to 30 minute period daily when studnts can read books of their choosing without interruption. Many students will read books they began reading as part of a literature unit, others will opt for something unrelated to the unit. Again, the teacher should conduct indiviudal conferences. Literature units, which should be planned to occur before and after the other phases of literature-centered reading, should occupy about one half of the school year.

Phase Three: Individualized Reading and Writing. During this phase children select books to read, and the genre and topics they wish to write about. This phase is the individualized reading model advocated by Veatch (1959, 1978) and others, and described in the preceding section during the discussion of Sarah McCarver's reading program.

Carole Edelsky (1986) has studied whole language classrooms with large numbers of language minority students. She made an essential point when she argued that authentic reading and writing, undertaken to give or get meaning, and not some facsimile performed to please the teacher, occurs only when children own their literacy events. In this phase of a literature-centered reading program the children define their purposes for reading and writing, and in so doing give their education high degrees of relevance and individualization.

Some children will read books introduced in previous literature units. Some may decide to read the same title, and through their own initiative, form a group. The teacher continues to monitor, through individual conferences, each child's progress and tailor instruction to personal needs. This phase is a good time for the teacher to read aloud short stories, nonfiction pieces, and poetry. This phase is also a good time for language minority students to continue to grow as readers and writers in their first language. While their monolingual classmates read and write in English, language minority students should be encouraged to select books and write stories, poems, letters, and essays in their first language.

Beginning readers. Whether children are acquiring literacy in their native language or becoming literate in a second language, there are two special program interventions that should be implemented for beginning readers: the Language Experience Approach (LEA) and predictable books. The LEA, which allows children to create personal reading material by dictating text to an adult, is frequently recognized as a productive method of developing second language reading (Carrel & Eisterhold, 1983; Dixon, 1986; Franklin, 1986; Thonis, 1976). Predictable books are written

with "natural language patterns [and] repetitive and/or cumulative syntactic and semantic sequences" (Kucer, 1985, p. 236). "The House That Jack Built" is an old and good example of a predictable story. Materials of this sort are appropriate for any person in the initial stages of acquiring literacy because the reader is able to use the redundancy of the text and the sense of the plot to bring meaning to print.

The model presented above shoud not be considered a final statement. Rather it was offered as a foundation for teachers, administrators, and scholars to build reading programs appropriate for the language minority children in our schools. Literature-centered reading, based on the perspective that reading in the process of bringing meaning to print, and accepting the individual differences in children, stands before us as the most promising means of creating a nation of people who can and will read.

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